

SECDEF Recognizes Acquisition Reform Senior Leaders at Pentagon Awards Ceremony

“Turning the Acquisition World on Its Head”

COLLIE J. JOHNSON

Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, in a Pentagon awards ceremony conducted on May 20, formally recognized the efforts of several key executives who have done so much to help the Department of Defense reform its acquisition process. From pilot programs, to legislation, to audit and oversight, the changes in the way the government acquires weapons systems to support the modern warfighter are monumental. Perry's presence at the ceremony symbolized the high priority he places on the acquisition reform effort.

Take Care of Those Who Work for You
Introduced by Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology Paul G. Kaminski, Perry prefaced his remarks with a quote from a leading business executive: “Take care of those who work for you, and you will float to greatness on their achievements.” Referring to the DoD 5000 Series Roll-out Ceremony previously conducted at the Pentagon on May 3, which recognized key members of the Acquisition Working Group and outstanding Integrated Product Teams/Working Integrated Product Teams, Perry said, “Three weeks ago we honored the achievements of those who work for you, and today I want to honor those of you who have floated to greatness on those achievements.”

Turning the Acquisition World on Its Head

Perry told the assembled acquisition key executives that their leadership was “turning the acquisition world on its head. We used to dictate to the business world and shape its practices to fit ours. Today we are listening to the business world and shaping our practices to fit theirs. Many of our predecessors have talked about acquisition reform, but we are doing it. We know it can be done. We know it can save money, and we know that it's critical for modernization, which is critical to supporting our warfighters.”

Perry went on to say that our challenge in the acquisition reform arena can best be described as *carpe diem*, the Latin phrase meaning “seize the day.” The Department of Defense has done just that by designating May 31 as Acquisition Reform Acceleration Day. “It is not a day to stand down and reflect on problems; it's a day to sit up and make changes happen. We know the time is now ripe for making these changes.”

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Perry stated that the President and the Vice President strongly support acquisition reform. Further, key Members of Congress support it and have passed enabling legislation. “The Deputy Secretary and I are both committed to the success of the acquisition reform program, and we have a superb acquisition team. Victor Hugo once said,

‘More powerful than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come.’ Well, acquisition reform is an idea whose time has come, and it is the key to our country being able to maintain its mighty Army, and Air Force, and Navy, and Marines.”

Colleen A. Preston

Perry's first award presentation went to Colleen A. Preston, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Reform. Preston received the Bronze Palm to the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service for exceptionally distinguished service as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Reform, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, from September 1995 to May 1996. According to the award citation, she “dramatically changed the way the Department of Defense procures goods and services from reducing workload of procurement personnel to leading the efforts to reform, streamline, and reengineer the acquisition processes to meet the needs of the nation's warfighters. She has made significant and lasting contributions to revolutionizing the Department's acquisition processes.”

Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service

Perry's second presentation was The Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service to five senior acquisition leaders: Eleanor R. Spector,

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Director of Defense Procurement (Spector's award was the Silver Palm signifying a third award of this honor); Irving N. Blickstein, Director of Acquisition Program Integration; Anthony M. Valletta, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (C3I); Darleen A. Druyun, former Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition; and Terry R. Little, Program Director, Joint Direct Attack Munition.

A single citation was read for the entire group: "For exceptionally meritorious civilian service in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology; the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command Control, Communications and Intelligence; and the Department of the Air Force. These individuals have made significant contributions in the areas of contracting and acquisition strategy improvements; institutionalization of significant management changes in the Department, including rewriting the Basic Acquisition Policies and Procedures; managing acquisition oversight through the use of integrated product teams; implementing acquisition reform by originating the Air Force Lightning Bolt initiatives; and by implementing best commercial practices, integrated product development and streamlined acquisition principles in major joint weapon development programs."

Vice Adm. William C. Bowes, USN
Perry's next presentation was The Defense Superior Service Medal, awarded to Vice Adm. William C. Bowes, USN, Senior Acquisition Executive and Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition from May 15 to October 31, 1995. "Adm. Bowes brought an extraordinary combination of personal integrity, operational and professional acquisition knowledge, and a visionary approach to the Navy's most senior acquisition position. His visions of government and industry teams, an empowered workforce, and value-added acquisition processes laid the

groundwork for the Navy of the 21st Century."

"The End of the Beginning"

At the conclusion of the presentations by Perry, Kaminski took the podium and spoke of the difficulties in implementing real acquisition reform. "Many different teams in the past have started the process of acquisition reform. I think the real difference in results I can attribute largely to the team assembled here who have worked diligently to make it happen." Borrowing a quote from Winston Churchill, Kaminski said, "This is not the end. It's not even the beginning of the end. But I think we are at *the end of the beginning* of acquisition reform. There is a foundation now in place today as a result of this wonderful team of people who have pulled and harnessed together to make this happen."

R. Noel Longuemare

In a unexpected announcement, Kaminski referred to another invaluable member of his staff he wished to recognize: "This ceremony wouldn't be complete without recognizing one other individual who has been so key to this effort, and that's my Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, R. Noel Longuemare." Mrs. Julie Longuemare, in a surprise appearance, joined Perry and Kaminski at the podium to honor her husband. Perry then presented Longuemare with The Bronze Palm to the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service for exceptionally distinguished service as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology from June 1995 to April 1996.

"Mr. Longuemare championed a massive reduction of mandatory military specifications and standards, forcing both industry and government to consider the best technical solutions for current acquisition challenges. Also, he championed innovative acquisition concepts including cost as an independent variable and the single process initiative, which represent benchmark thinking for cost reduction, quality

improvement, and industrial competitiveness. He set the example for constructive communication as a community standard, fostering improved coordination between the Defense and Service staffs, particularly the requirements definition process."

Paul G. Kaminski

Not to be outdone, Perry had an unexpected finale to the awards ceremony. Joined by Mrs. Julie Kaminski whose presence was a surprise, he presented The Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service to Paul G. Kaminski for exceptionally distinguished service as the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology from October 1994 to May 1996.

"Dr. Kaminski's inspiring leadership, extensive knowledge, and dedication to purpose were instrumental in the unprecedented successes of the Department of Defense's efforts to reengineer and streamline the acquisition process. Throughout this period he continually demonstrated an unequalled mastery for leading organizational change by empowering the acquisition workforce to explore better, faster, and more cost-effective ways of doing business."

"People Often Stumble Over the Truth"

Adding his own Winston Churchill quote to the day's events, Perry remarked: "People often stumble over the truth, but most pick themselves up and hurry away without being affected by it. Paul Kaminski, along with others of us, has stumbled over the truth that acquisition reform is a necessity for this Department. But Paul has not hurried away without being affected by it. He has taken that truth and manifested his effort to try to make a reality of the most effective program in acquisition reform that this Department has ever seen. I think the Department owes you, Paul, a very special vote of thanks as the leader of this absolutely first-class acquisition team that was assembled here today, and I'd like to take this occasion to offer my thanks."